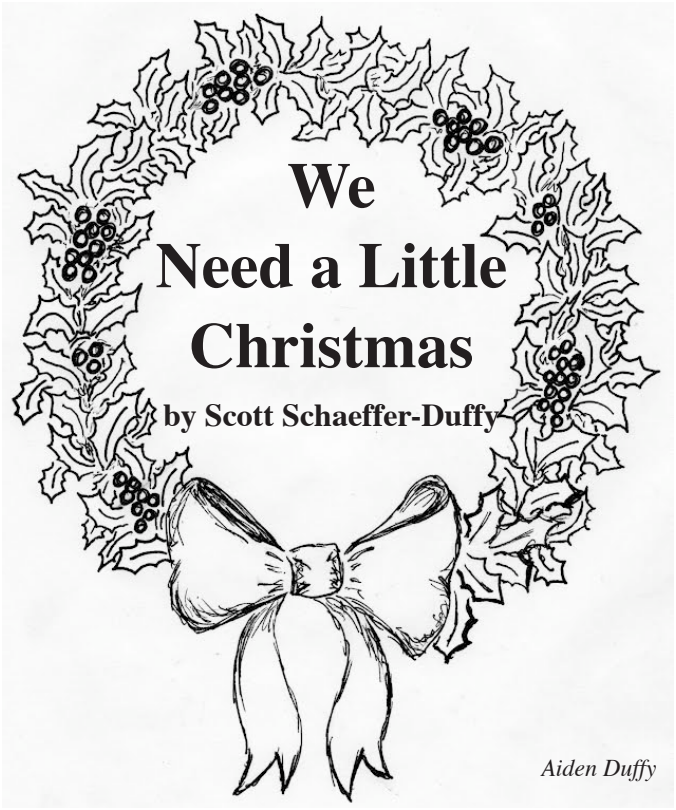
THE
CATHOLIC RADICAL

"...to foster a society based on creed instead of greed." Peter Maurin

December/January 2016-17 ***Price: For whatever it's worth.***



Statistics show that the percentage of Americans defining themselves as practicing Christians has significantly declined while the percentage who claim either another faith or no religion at all is increasing. Nonetheless, after a bruising year in American politics, one replete with bitter division, rancor, mean-spiritedness, fear, and now, with the election of Donald Trump, tremendous anxiety, we could all use a little Christmas.

Contrary to the speech Linus gives in *A Charlie Brown Christmas* centering the holiday on the birth of Christ, many non-Christians see it simply as a time of generosity and childhood innocence. Americans of all stripes have their hearts warmed by *The Miracle on 34th Street*, *Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer*, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas, A Christmas Carol,* and *Elf*. We rejoice to see the downtrodden lifted up and villains like the Grinch, Scrooge, James Caan's Walter, and the Abominable Snowmonster transformed. Whether we think of ourselves as religious or not, Christmas restores our souls.

While many bemoan the replacement of "Merry Christmas" with "Happy Holidays," I believe the heart of the holy day retains a vital grip on our psyche and culture. Most Americans do not want to accept that what just passed as a national election is the most constructive we can manage. We don't want to accept that conditions have to continually worsen for people of color, women, children, men, and immigrants. We don't want to accept that war and all manner of violence will never stop. We want to believe that, through a miraculous intervention, our best selves can shine through, reminding us that we are one family.

When I receive *The Catholic Worker* newspaper in the mail, I roll my eyes that the Christmas issue arrives as late as February. While the religious celebration of Christmas extends until Epiphany, the holly is gone from churches by mid January. Reading about Christmas in February is a bit weird, and yet, I

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It's Gotta be the Joy

by Brendan Walsh

Editor's Note: The author and his wife, Willa Bickham, are founding members of the Viva House Catholic Worker in Baltimore. To get a copy of their book, The Long Loneliness in Baltimore*, write to them at: Viva House, 26 S Mount Street, Baltimore MD 21223.*

Some say working the soup kitchen
best defines the Catholic Worker.
Some say opening your home to the lonely and destitute
best defines the Catholic Worker.
Some say resisting the warmakers, doin' the time,
refusing to go along with the greed and violence,
Some say it's all of these, knowing full-well that the best
we can do is plant a few seeds— knowing full-well
the harvest is a long time coming.

But, deep down, really, in our heart of hearts, we know...

It's Gotta be the JOY!

You lose joy, you lose it all.
No joy, no hope. No joy, no endurance.
No joy, no understanding of the suffering.
No joy, no meaning to life.
No joy and it's just another year in Guantanamo.
No joy and we're all just doin' time on the planet.

Oh, yeah—
It's Gotta be the Joy! Ω

Christmas

(Continued from Page 1)

always enjoy the warm sentiment in the heart of winter. And, to be fair to my Catholic Worker siblings in New York City, I have to admit that copies of this paper will be distributed to the end of January.

Just as some say, "We are an Easter people," Catholic Workers could say, "We are a Christmas people." We celebrate the good news that Perfection came down to earth and remains with us, that obscene violence, like King Herod's massacre of innocents in Bethlehem, cannot stamp out the Incarnation of all that is good. We see the Prince of Peace as the center of Christmas, but are happy to stand shoulder to shoulder with those who merely aspire to Jesus' ideals without faith in His divinity. In fact, it's oftentimes a heck of a lot easier to stand with peacemaking atheists than pius triumphalists.

But before I get dragged down into my own self-righteous sheep and goats division of humanity, it is good to recall that in both the religious and secular Christmas parables, mercy is poured out to everyone. No one is beyond redemption.

When I read *A Christmas Carol* out loud to my then six-year-old daughter Grace, we never got past the part when Scrooge's fiancée breaks up with him because Grace burst into tears and refused to hear another word. She couldn't bear to see even one of literature's most iconic villains unhappy.

That's what Christmas is about, transformative love. If a heartless miser like Scrooge could change, there's hope for anyone, even Trump. His redemption may be considerably harder than Scrooge's, which took place in a single night, but the unlikeliness of Christmas gives us hope that miracles are possible. If endless war is to be avoided and creation is to flourish, we need to find ways, not to destroy those who are imperfect, but to raise everyone to the perfection they were created to be. For that optimistic spirit, we could all use a little Christmas now and all year long. Ω

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CATHOLIC RADICAL

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What About Violence?

by Lorin Peters

"What does your tradition tell you to do when you or your neighbor is being violated?" I was listening to an interfaith dialogue, "Mercy, The Heart of Peace," at the Catholic Cathedral of Christ the Light on September 6 in Oakland, California. The Jewish rabbi and the Muslim professor both answered from their traditions. But on this question, the Orthodox bishop was silent. How sad.

Our tradition does have a strong answer. Jesus said, "Offer no violent resistance to one who is evil." King James' translators removed the word "violent" in the first English version. But the word for violent resistance ("stenai') is in the original Greek. Jesus could hardly tell his listeners not to resist evil. He resisted all kinds of evil throughout His entire ministry.

But He resisted evil without violence. That is exactly what "nonviolence" is: "without violence." We are to resist evil every way we can, except, no violence. Because violence, any violence at all, feeds the evil we are trying to resist. It gives the ones doing evil the perfect excuse for what they are doing. Then they believe they are fighting our evil. Have you ever noticed that, in war, both sides claim they are fighting the evil of the other side? As a justification for invading Poland, Hitler claimed he had to defend Germany from a Polish attack at Gleiwitz (a German radio station attacked by German soldiers disguised in Polish uniforms). ISIS claims they have to fight the "evil West," especially "satanic America."

Jesus' next words: If you are slapped on your right cheek, as a slave or child, turn your other cheek like a free man or adult. If you are taken to court by a money lender who has already bankrupted you, give him all that's left of your clothing. If you are compelled, by an occupying soldier, to carry his bags for one mile, carry them a second mile. Each of these responses is courageous. Each is unexpected and creative. Each is also compassionate, inviting a change of heart and reconciliation.

"Love your enemy. Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who mistreat you." Jesus is talking about a love that is courageous. When I was a member of a Christian Peacemaker Team and our home in Palestine was invaded by occupying soldiers, we offered them coffee. Thank God for Jesus' way of courageous love. Ω

The Jungle Is Gone, But Work Goes On

by Brother Johannes Maertens

Editor's Note: The author is a member of the Saint Maria Skobtsova Catholic Worker in Calais, France, where an encampment of refugees and migrants called the Jungle was destroyed by the French government in October.

Often people ask me how I feel now that the Jungle has been demolished. The answer is that my heart is saddened by the way it happened. People I worked with for months have been forcibly moved; a community I belonged to is no longer. So, our volunteers and many others feel sad and angry.

I am heartbroken not because of the Jungle, the Jungle is only dust, but because of the people who are broken, because of the dust in our souls and eyes. Because I love, I am heartbroken — but I will always love as this cannot be stolen from me.

The demolition happened in five days. About 10,000 people were moved in less than a week's time to all corners of France. They didn't know where they were taken, didn't know how long they would be able to stay there, and what their legal status would be. The authorities communicated vaguely and at the very last moment.

I am worried about my friend Amaniel who is 16 (and waiting to go to his sister in the UK). He is now in a center in the south of France not knowing what follows. Or Yamanjé, who also is 16 and had hoped to be on a bus to London, but is now in a center in Langres. These youngsters are travelling alone without family or friends. I met them in the Orthodox Church in the Jungle and followed them closely because of their vulnerability.

I am worried about Mohammed, an isolated young Sudanese man with serious mental health issues. He lost control over his life after losing his young wife traveling through the Libyan desert. He stepped onto a bus to somewhere with the help of an Eritrean man who took care of him. I couldn't walk through the camp without Mohammed running toward me shouting either in joy or anger "Babba, babba, babba" (daddy). He could be so annoying sometimes, demanding attention at the wrong moment and scaring off people. But I learned to love him and care for him and to put my fears aside. What will happen to him? Will they understand it is psychological pain and not anger?

I am worried for Titi, one of the Eritrean women who came to pray at our

house and called our volunteers crying that she didn't knew where she was being taken after more than 12 hours on a bus. She ended up somewhere near the Spanish border. After everything refugees have been through, that is how we treat them.

In the last months, so many people passed through our house, so many volunteers and students joined us, and we had the privilege of being part of so many people's lives, learned from their cultures, customs, and languages. The Jungle was a place of destitution and problems, pain, and violence, but also of community, hospitality, and friendship.

In the Jungle, it took a lot of resources to welcome somebody. Water needed to be heated on little wood fires. Guests were served first, and when there was enough, the hosts took some for themselves. Hospitality, to share what you have with the stranger, was a big thing. And the Jungle was one of the few places in the world where Afghans, Sudanese, Ethiopians, Eritreans, Muslims, and Christians lived together, formed community, and faced all the challenges this posed.

Often I met God in the Jungle, in the walking and talking with refugees, in sitting together in silence because we have no language in common. In the joy and the pain of these people's lives, my relationship with God has deepened and changed me. I now understand more of what it means to meet Christ in the stranger.

No one should live in a jungle; no one should live in that kind of destitution, but the Jungle ended too abruptly and without respect for the refugees and migrants. For several nights, a hundred minors ended up sleeping on the street because there wasn't enough space foreseen in the shelters.

I hear their crying in my head. I feel their fear and pain from their nights alone. I do not know what to do. I want to hold them as if they were my children and say, "You have to let the Jungle go. Wipe the Jungle dust from your shoes, shine up, and live the beauty that you are."

From the very beginning, our Catholic Worker house focussed on the most vulnerable refugees and migrants. Practically that meant that most people coming into the house had health problems, exhaustion, or were deeply stressed. Most came to us either from the city or the Jungle hospital. In a certain way, our house evolved a bit into a hospice.

The refugees in the Jungle hospital were placed in other centers save Mamoot from Egypt, whom the government seems to have forgotten. He is a young man recovering from bone cancer who will be staying with us until his next admission to hospital in two weeks.

Our house has six guests for the moment, five with health or vulnerability issues. There are more refugees coming who have no jungle anymore to go to.

Since the war in Kosovo in 1998, refugees and migrants have been coming to Calais. They have squatted in houses and lived in beach huts, in bushes, in the dunes, and in several jungles. As long as Calais is the geographical and logistical connection point between France and the UK, refugees and migrants will come here. Hopefully, our work will continue to serve the most vulnerable of God's children. Please keep us in your prayers. Ω

A Biblical Priority

by Matthew Harper

Editor's Note: The author, a member of the Los Angeles Catholic Worker and graduate of Holy Cross College, wrote this article originally for his alma mater.

At a dinner in 1986, my father sat with a group of Catholic business executives. The US Catholic Conference of Bishops had just released their pastoral letter, *Economic Justice for All*. One of the men began to criticize the bishops, suggesting they had no business getting into the topic of the economy because they were not economists. My father, reflecting on this argument, responded that the problem seemed to be that each group just had different priorities. The bishops' premise was the Gospel, and thus their participation was required. These executives simply prioritized something else, thus justifying their critique of the bishops' participation and perspectives.

Four Holy Cross graduates – Daniel Marshall '68, Michael Harank '76, Scott Schaeffer-Duffy '80, and myself, Matt Harper '11 – recently joined a Catholic Worker gathering in Las Vegas to explore the fundamental Catholic values of a radical, nonviolent love of the other and a prioritization of the poor and oppressed in society. On Sunday, October 9th, a group of roughly 100 Catholic Workers celebrated Mass outside of the Nevada Test Site, an active nuclear weapons testing facility for the US military, before heading to Creech Air Force Base, the control center for most Predator drone attacks in Somalia, Pakistan, Yemen, Afghanistan, Syria, and Libya. Many chose to participate in civil disobedience at these sites. They felt a moral obligation to delay the soldiers arriving to carry out drone missions because these acts are a clear violation of human rights. More importantly, though, they risked arrest to bear witness to the incompatibility of violence with their faith traditions.

There are many who see these acts as ignorant, infuriating, and disrespectful. There are many who suggest we are not "qualified" enough to be entitled to this position. Many voiced these same sentiments when Holy Cross staff, faculty, and students joined courageously in protest during the Homecoming football

Fr. Steve Kelly, SJ says Mass at the Nevada test site

game to call attention to the reality of police violence towards Black and Brown communities. During my senior year at Holy Cross, many on the campus had similar sentiments after the assassination of bin Laden, when a few of us dared to ask, "Is this justice?" But, to me, these types of protests reflect a thoughtful, spiritual bearing witness to the deepest values taught at Holy Cross, and not just in the political science department.

My freshman year program invited me to ask, "How then shall we live?" I was challenged to explore my value system and to live with integrity. Spiritually, I was encouraged to "preach the gospel, and when necessary use words," and to join the long Catholic tradition of those who lived "for and with others," even when the unwillingness to bend to the complacency and pressures of our world guaranteed virulent opposition. I was also encouraged to think critically about state-sanctioned violence. I was taught to consider the US's responsibility in creating the social, economic, and political conditions that incite violence, just as I was encouraged to challenge the narrative about the supposed "inevitability" of violence and "futility" of nonviolence.

No one is naïve to the presence of violence in the world (though many are unaware of its severity). That said, we fail to bring the same level of creativity (and investment) to peace as we do to war. Also, we must explore the historical failure of violence and the true successes of nonviolence. And if one really wants to talk about ignorant and infuriating acts, data from 2014 suggests that the U.S. drone strikes killed 1,147 bystanders and only 41 combatants.

While I realize that no one has figured out a perfect way to follow Christ, Catholic Workers make an earnest effort to reflect, dialogue, and pray on how best to more accurately reflect biblical priorities. After my experience with the Catholic Worker, I've reached two conclusions. First, standing up for justice and peace, especially when they are unpopular or deemed foolishly "idealistic," is a biblical necessity and a political obligation. Second, liberalizing the military, an argument Holy Cross makes for allowing NROTC, operate on campus, is not a concept of the Bible nor is it compatible with Christ's demands for love, forgiveness, and turning of the other cheek. I believe the call for a Jubilee Year of Mercy affirms this thinking. To those who disagree, it might be fruitful if we clarified our premises and priorities. Like the US bishops on the economy, those of us who stood that day in opposition to military violence made the Gospel our priority. I hope that is Holy Cross' priority too, and your premise as well. May our priorities guide our actions since, as Saint Mother Theresa reminds us, "God does not require that we be successful, only that we be faithful." Ω

What Else Could We Spend a Trillion Dollars On?

by Sue Ablao

Editor's Note: On August 8, 2016, the author was arrested along with Mack Johnson for holding a banner which read, "20 MILES WEST OF SEATTLE IS THE LARGEST CONCENTRATION OF DEPLOYED NUCLEAR WEAPONS," across the entrance to the west coast US naval home of the Trident submarines. The following is the statement, the author made before Judge Marilyn Paja in Kitsap County District Court on September 30th. It is reprinted with permission from the October 2016 issue of Ground Zero.

August 8, 2016 was the week of the 71st anniversary of the first and only use of nuclear weapons. These weapons were used on the citizens of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. More than 200,000 people were killed and many more severely injured.

I stepped in the roadway at Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor on August 8 to say this must never happen again, that business at Bangor MUST stop!

The weapons of mass destruction that are stored, maintained, and deployed from this base are an affront to humanity and an insult to God and God's creation. They kill indiscriminately and have the power to destroy the planet. They are wrong on so many levels.

In the next 30 years, this government is set to spend one TRILLION dollars to replace, upgrade, and maintain these weapons of mass destruction.

In the meantime, our infrastructure is crumbling. Roads and bridges are falling apart. Many of our water systems are contaminated with lead and other toxins. Social services for the poor are being drastically cut. Quality health care is still out of reach for many. Student debt is crippling. Housing is out of reach for many, with homelessness ever increasing. Education is unequally, and in some cases barely, funded.

So what could one trillion dollars get us today? Investing in the education sector, for example, would create 26.7 million jobs. Millions of jobs would also be created by rebuilding roads, bridges, and out-dated and dangerous water systems.

Congress says they just cannot find the money to fund these life giving programs. BUT it seems they can find money to fund these weapons of mass destruction and death.

The sign that Mack Johnson and I held pointed out that the largest concentration of nuclear weapons in one place in this country is in Bangor. The sign Phil Davis and George Rodkey held said, "No more genocide in my name." Raymond Hunthausen, the Catholic Archbishop of Seattle in the 1970's and 80's, called Bangor "the Auschwitz of Puget Sound." The weapons at this base can indeed cause genocide of epic proportions if they are ever used.

Indeed, the question is: Can these weapons ever be used, be it as a first strike or in response to an attack from some other nuclear power? We are, after all, the only nation in the world that has actually used these weapons of mass destruction.

We are now back to the era of the Cold War of the 50's and 60's, with a policy of MAD (Mutual Assured Destruction). To Quote David Hall of Physicians for Social Responsibility and Leonard Eiger of the Ground Zero Center, in a recent *Seattle Times* op-ed: "The use of nuclear weapons is illegal under international law and humanitarian law — unusable because there is no way to limit escalation. They are exorbitantly expensive and a massive diversion of human talent and resources away from diplomacy, foreign assistance, innovation, and public health."

Our children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren deserve better. They deserve a life. They deserve a nuclear free world.

And that is why I stepped in the road to say, "Never again! No to business as usual at this base!"

I would invite you to inform yourself on this very important issue and join us in saying no to nuclear weapons. Ω

Editor's Note: After listening to each of the defendant's testimony, Judge Paja dismissed the charges "in the interest of justice." She also thanked them both for their service and action.

Meanwhile, on October 26, 2016, The United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution by a vote of 123-38 to outlaw nuclear weapons worldwide. Despite President Obama's oft-stated goal of a nuclear-free world, the US joined Russia, France, Britain, China, Korea, Israel, their allies, and aspiring nuclear powers in voting no.

The Harm of Single-Issue Voting

In the February/March *Catholic Radical,* we graded sixteen candidates for the US presidency on issues dear to Pope Francis, based on his encyclical letters *Lumen Fidei* and *Laudato Si*, public statements, and public actions, like sheltering refugee families in the Vatican. We looked at: refugees, global warming, immigration, war, military spending, living wage, affordable healthcare, gun control, abortion, the death penalty, and assisted suicide. Donald Trump earned a D, Hillary Clinton a C+, and Bernie Sanders a B+.

Two weeks before the presidential election, a parish in the Worcester diocese held an event to help Catholics make a moral choice in the voting booth. At this event, six handouts were distributed.

One flyer, published by *Our Sunday Visitor* and entitled "How to form your Catholic Conscience," gave general guidelines for making an ethical decision. A second flyer, also distributed by *Our Sunday Visitor*, was entitled "In the Voting Booth: A Catholic Perspective." While the flyer stressed "We are not single-issue voters," it also emphasized that the obligation is to oppose "intrinsic evils," the most important of which being "the direct and intentional destruction of innocent human life from the moment of conception until natural death." It went on to say, "Other concerns — from war and the death penalty to racism and care for the poor and immigrant... are not optional concerns that can be dismissed." It concluded by discussing the difficulty voters face when all the candidates are morally unacceptable.

The other handouts made no effort to be subtle. A flyer, sponsored by Priests for Life, calling itself a "non-partisan guide" on issues of concern to the electorate, compared the Republican and Democratic platforms on sex education, Obamacare, marriage, medical research, Iran, and foreign assistance. The topics and excerpts this flyer included left no doubt which party was good and which was not.

A flyer put out by the National Right to Life organization compared the Trump and Clinton positions on abortion. Not surprisingly, this flyer was also entirely pro-Trump.

A homily delivered by Rev. Peter Stravinskas at the Church of the Innocents in New York City, quoted the US Catholic bishops: "There are some things we must never do, as individuals or a society, because they are always incompatible with the love of God and neighbor.... These are called intrinsically evil actions. They must always be rejected and opposed and must never be supported or condoned." Abortion is identified as the "preeminent threat to human dignity." Father Stravinskas asks, "Is this 'single-issue' voting?" and answers, "No, while

I do not vote for someone solely on the basis of one issue, there are certain issues we can call automatic disqualifiers, ...such as legal abortion, redefining marriage in a way that denies its essential meaning, or racist behavior." He concludes, "I could never support Hillary Clinton and the radically leftist program of her party. I am reasonably comfortable with the Republican platform, but distinctly uncomfortable with its standard-bearer due to his brashness and very spotty record as a conservative." He then hopes that Donald Trump will have a conversion to conservative principles before appointing Supreme Court justices.

Although Father Stravinskas is "uncomfortable" with Donald Trump's "brashness," he is not disturbed by Trump's sexism, anti-Semitism, racism, and disdain for the handicapped. He fails to mention Pope Francis' concerns about war, global warming, immigration, refugees, the death penalty, torture, and capitalism, while only faulting Trump for not being conservative enough.

The last handout was a booklet entitled, "A Brief Catechism for Catholic Voters" by Father Stephen Toracco. He says, "You should not place a candidate who is pro-capital punishment (and anti-abortion) in the same moral category as a candidate who is pro-abortion. Faced with such a set of candidates, there would be no moral dilemma and the clear moral obligation would be to vote for the candidate who is pro-capital punishment." Father Torraco concludes that it is a "mortal sin" to vote for a pro-abortion candidate "no matter how good their positions might be on Medicare and unemployment." He too fails to mention the deliberate killing of innocents by means such as war.

The distribution of these handouts was the prelude to a talk by a Franciscan priest who was emphatic that abortion supersedes all other issues. The priest did not seem to care that Pope Francis stresses an urgent need to address additional life issues.

As a Catholic Worker community which opposes the deliberate taking of any life, we are appalled that millions of unborn children have been killed. We are also horrified that millions have been killed in war, that 48,000 children starve to death every day in the Third World, that tens of thousands of people have been tortured and/or executed, and that all life on earth is threatened by nuclear weapons and global warming. We refuse to allow our compassion for the unborn to eclipse our concern for our sisters and brothers targeted by drone missiles, languishing in prisons, drowning in the Mediterranean, or dying from barrel bombs.

We also suspect that the devil's bargain anti-abortion Catholics made with Donald Trump will end up as hollow as the ones they made with Ronald Reagan and both presidents Bush. Those Republicans did not stop abortion, but they certainly did increase war, pollution, and poverty.

We will work for the day when Catholics consider all life issues as inseparable, a day when we will not give our blessing to lesser evil in the misguided hope that it can accomplish good. Ω

Letters

Scott & Claire,
What a blessing to receive another of your great *C.R*'s with this one having a picture and marvelous poem of Saint Thérèse. I've always been so grateful to her—as I know you also are.

Ammon [Hennacy] was good friends with Ben Salmon.

Joan Thomas
Phoenix, Arizona

Editor's Note: The following is a excerpt from a letter by one of many incarcerated subscribers to The Catholic Radical. *His name is withheld for his protection.*

Scott,
...Sure been a lot of violence lately!!! (an understatement) Gangs going wild! Smashed my TV, not even one and a half years old! $240 down the drain! Fights and attacks all over the place. I guess staff considers them "the norm," as nothing is done about all of it! When I brought the destruction of my TV to the staff's attention, they actually got hostile! Cared less, telling me, "It's prison."

A California state prison

Dear Scott and Claire,
I cherish every word and image (they all speak to my heart) of the October/November *Catholic Radical*....

I found a wonderful church, a pleasant walk from here, Saint Paul's Episcopal Church. We Episcopalians are more Catholic than Protestant, though sometimes the Episcopal Church USA is called the Protestant Episcopal Church. The main difference is that the ECUSA nurtures and encourages the ordination of married people, women, and LGBT folks. We are part of the Anglican Communion. My favorite Anglicans of the last 100 years are Archbishop Desmond Tutu (South Africa) and the last presiding bishop, Edmond Browning (USA). Not saints like Ben Salmon or Dorothy Day (thanks *so* much for Ben Salmon's letter), just wonderful workers for justice soaked in the power of the Holy Spirit and God's redeeming love — like Catholic Workers, the most fun-spreading, generous people I have ever encountered.

The bed bugs of "Mason Street Musings" brought to mind my daughter's similar ordeal in 2014 (she got them from hosting an Episcopal youth group).

"The Value of Work," one of the most inspirational pieces I've ever read, brought to mind my favorite professions, favorite because of the love, compassion, commitment, and insights animating their people: actor, baker, caregiver, and oncologist. I have friends and family members in all but the last one. Over the last years, I've gotten to know Rafil Dhafir, an Iraqi-born Syracuse, NY-based oncologist, unjustly imprisoned for over ten years (www.dhafirtrial.net)....

Jeanie Shaterian
Walnut Creek, California

Dear Scott,
...[My wife] Kay and I both enjoyed your memoir tremendously, with its combination of levity and commitment to gospel order....

These days, it's heartening to see you illuminate the value of work in the newsletter. It is a component of personal as well as social health as you point out. I don't know if the political system is capable of guiding that insight, but you're providing an exemplary prospective at the micro-level where things count....

Martin Ray
Gloucester, Massachusetts

Scott,
I will review your book online — at the top of my list to do — especially as I laughed so hard through much of it. Thank you for your honest, heart-felt words and stories. I kept re-reading passages to my fiancée — "You have to listen to this!" I finally finished the whole book and *greatly* enjoyed it.

Kathleen Reside
Millersburg, Pennsylvania

Nothing Is Impossible: Stories from the Life of a Catholic Worker

by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

Send $25 or whatever you can afford to 52 Mason Street, Worcester, MA 01610

Catholic Worker Calendar

December 7 — Good News from Nevada and Utah: Come see a slide presentation by Scott and Claire Schaeffer-Duffy about an international Catholic Worker gathering they attended which concluded with protests at the Nuclear Test Site and Creech Air Force Base, which they followed with hiking in Zion National Park. 7 P.M., 52 Mason Street. Followed by refreshments.

December 10 & January 14 — Reversing the Gun Culture Vigil: Join us opposite the entrance to the The Gun Parlor shooting range. 12:30-1:30 P.M., 170 Prescott Street, Worcester.

December 14, January 4 & 18 — Evening Prayer: Join us in prayer and Taize chant at 7 P.M.. 52 Mason Street. Followed by refreshments.

December 18 Christmas Carolling: Please join us in our annual tradition of visiting a nursing home and neighbors with cheerful songs. Meet at 5:30 P.M. at 52 Mason Street. Mulled cider and other refreshments to follow.

Mason Street Musings

We had eight guests last night, the most we've had in 2016. Normally, we only have five, but we gave our son Aiden's bed (he's at college) to Susan Schaller, who is with us for several weeks to help out, and cleared space in our attic for a mother and her five-year-old daughter, who had spent the previous night in the cold. Sad to say, the eight folks staying with us represent only a small fraction of those who have asked us for shelter. Thanks to your generosity, we helped one family pay their rent and an elderly couple pay for a hotel room, but most of those who appealed to us were turned away, as Mary and Joseph were, with "No room at the inn."

There are many times when I feel inadequate and angry that a nation as wealthy as ours is not providing more opportunities for its most vulnerable people. I believe, like Dorothy Day, that we still have to drop our pebble in the pond, but wonder how such ripples can withstand the waves of injustice and violence in our nation and world.

Thankfully, Claire and I were blessed to attend a Catholic Worker gathering hosted by the Las Vegas Catholic Worker community. In that gaudy city of false promises, we enjoyed the company of young and old pebble droppers from Catholic Worker communities as far away as Mexico, Germany, and the Netherlands. We learned that, as a movement, our contribution is not inconsequential and that our personal approach is deeply appreciated. We also were blessed to have the opportunity to kneel down in the road with other Catholic Workers to block the entrance to a military base where Predator drones are deployed to kill people overseas, and we were blessed again to spend seven hours in the Las Vegas jail with more of

Ade Bethune

God's poor. And then, as if God had a bottomless sack of gifts like Santa Claus, Claire and I were blessed to spend two days hiking in Zion National Park.

One of the twenty-four men put in the holding cell with us, said, "Now that you've been here, I'll bet you won't do this again." In reply, I asked each of the Catholic Workers how often they had been arrested. When the total topped three hundred times, including a dozen this year alone for 69-year-old librarian and CW archivist Phil Runkel, the man smiled and said, "I guess you will do this again."

I could not help but think of the Pauline reading Claire and I chose for our wedding: "Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God." It was *so* encouraging to stand with humble and good-humored people who count jail time as a paltry price to pay to reign in the state's insatiable appetite for war.

Since our return to Worcester, more Catholic Worker friends have been jailed alongside Native Americans at Standing Rock, North Dakota. Some, like Mark Colville of Amistad Catholic Worker in New Haven, Connecticut, spent extra time behind bars because they refused to pay bail. Like the World War II conscientious objector, Desmond Doss, portrayed in the new film *Hacksaw Ridge*, Mark would not compromise his principles to avoid suffering.

There are hefty challenges to be faced and needs to be met in Worcester and beyond, but they are dwarfed by the enormity of the hope conveyed when even a single person gives herself or himself to love others. We are not alone. We are in a cloud of witnesses wherein each of us is bound to the others. Their virtue improves the stature and serenity of us all.

Thank you all so very much for blessing us with the privilege to remain here. May this Christmas and New Year be overflowing with joy for you all!

Scott

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